

President's House Site Meeting

September 6, 2005

Merchant's Exchange Building

Representatives of the National Park Service and the Ad-Hoc Historians met to clarify what we now agree and still do not agree on regarding the physical space and the labeling of that space at the President's House.

There is much agreement beyond the contents of this document. The meeting focused on items that had previously been in contention, and it successfully came to agreement on the locations and labels noted on the plan on page 3.

This document was subsequently distributed to non-participant members of both groups and comments received are attached as a postscript (see page 4).

Attendees at the September 6 meeting included the following:

Ad-Hoc Historians:

Randall Miller
David Moltke-Hansen
Shan Holt
Edward Lawler, Jr.
Doug Heller

National Park Service:

Dennis Reidenbach
Jed Levin
Steve Sitarsky
Doris Fanelli
Coxey Toogood

Agreement

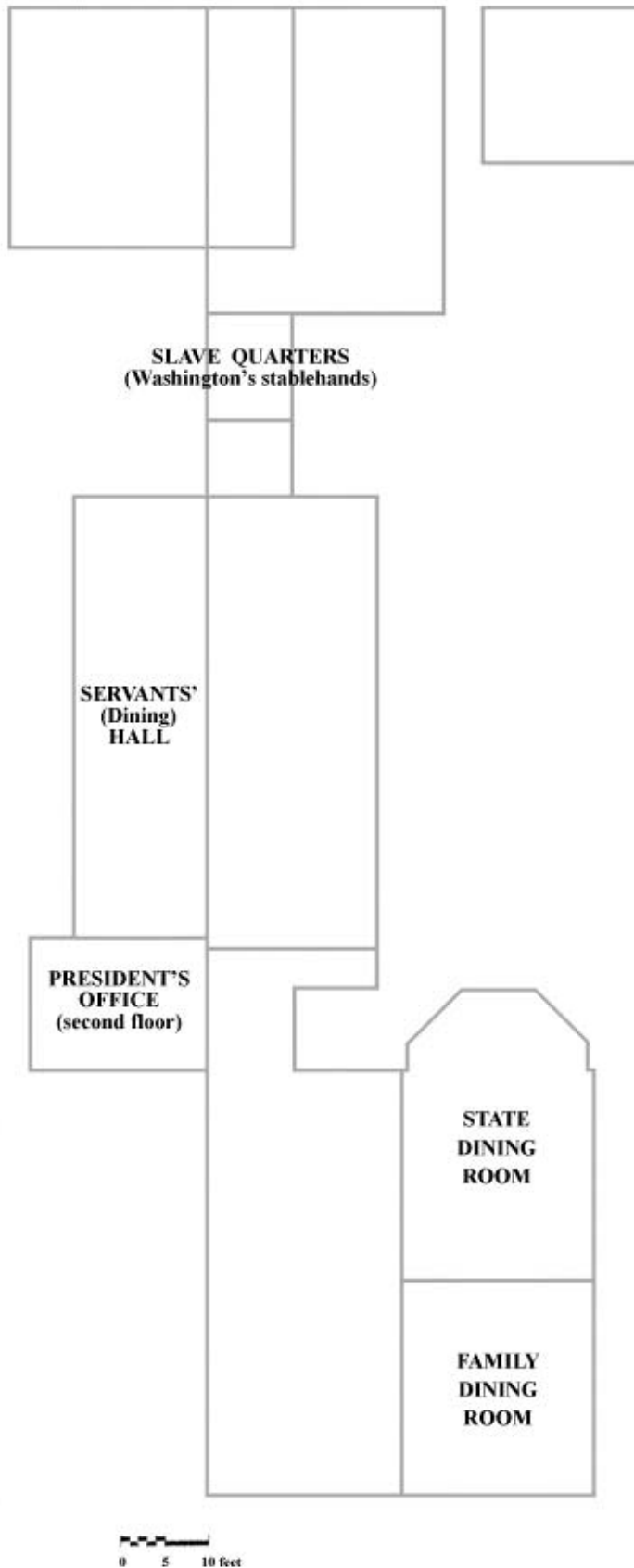
- The building was on this site.
- Washington and Adams worked and lived here as president.
- The footprint of the house and outbuildings as shown on the Lawler Plan and shown on the plan on page 3.
- Ice House containing the ice pit, as shown on the Lawler Plan and represented on the plan on page 3 as the unlabeled box at the upper right side
- Dimensions of the buildings
- Relations of the buildings to one another
- Location and labeling of the “State Dining Room”
- Location, orientation, and labeling of President’s Office as “President’s Office (second floor)”
- Location and labeling of the “Family Dining Room”
- Location and labeling of the Smokehouse extension as “Slave Quarters (Washington’s stablehands)”
- Location and labeling of the “Servants’ (Dining) Hall”
- If the floor plan is to be more detailed, it will require additional study by an architectural historian with professional expertise.
- A complete site plan, including the elements beneath the LBC, should be displayed somewhere on the site.
- The design should incorporate sufficient architectural detail of the site and floor plan to fully support the site themes.
- The Consensus Document and the Minority Report have been provided to the city and no further action is to be taken on this matter.
- The six site themes are:
 1. The house and the people who lived and worked there
 2. The Executive Branch of the US Government
 3. The system and methods of slavery
 4. African-American Philadelphia
 5. The move to freedom
 6. History lost and found

Disagreement

- There is disagreement about what level of architectural detail within the perimeter walls on the floor plan is useful to make the visitor experience “real.”

Plan Showing Points of Agreement

- (see page 3)



Postscripts

Dennis Reidenbach and Randall Miller, as representatives of the Park Service and the Ad-Hoc Historians were invited to distribute this document to others in their groups for additional comment. One comment was received within the time period provided, from Ad-Hoc member Michael Coard. His email is given here, followed by the attachment he sent, the Position Paper of ATAC!

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From: "MICHAEL COARD" <michaelcoard@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, September 16, 2005 8:48 PM
Subject: September 6 Document

Avenging The Ancestors Coalition (ATAC) is a broad-based coalition of African historians, academics, community activists, civic organizations, elected officials, lawyers, religious leaders, radio personalities, and other descendants of the Euro-American slave trade. It was formed to aggressively and relentlessly petition Independence National Historical Park (INHP) to commemorate the Africans enslaved by George Washington at the President's House (P/H)- i.e., America's first "White House"- located at the current site of the Liberty Bell Center (LBC).

A commemoration is essential in order to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" about American history and to memorialize the enslaved African descendants who enhanced this country's executive branch by slaving at the P/H and whose enslaved descendants made this country possible by slaving throughout America.

Whether the commemoration is a statue, a series of statues, a waterfall, an eternal flame, a sculpture, a wall, a whispering corridor, or something else, it must be culturally-dignified, historically-complete, prominently-conspicuous, and physically-dramatic. In addition, it must be designed and constructed with the substantive (if not primary) input and participation of the descendants of Africans in America.

Furthermore, it must be appropriately-located, which means, e.g., at or near the 55 x 35 foot outline of the kitchen ell/servants' hall. Moreover, it must include slave quarters footprint markings at the entrance to the LBC.

The monument and markings will be absolutely historic in that nothing like it has ever been done since this country's founding in 1776 and in that nothing like it has ever existed in any of this country's 50 states or its territories

While ATAC could legitimately complain about INHP's failure since 1974- and even much more recently since 2002- to "do the right thing" in that it suppressed information about slavery at the P/H and deceived the public about slave quarters there, ATAC will not complain. Instead, it will demand justice for its ancestors. It will demand the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" about the peculiar institution that made America great and that cost enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendants not only their freedom but also their culture, family, language, land, religion, name, and in many cases, their sanity, limbs, and even lives.

For more information, please refer to the attached ATAC Position Paper.

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POSITION PAPER OF ATAC!

What ATAC Requires:

Avenging The Ancestors Coalition (ATAC) requires a culturally-dignified, historically-complete, and physically-dramatic commemorative project (including slave quarters highlighting)- with substantive and ongoing participation from the African American community- on the grounds of the President's House site to honor primarily the nine (known) African descendants who were enslaved by President George Washington at America's first "White House," which is the current location of the new Liberty Bell Center.

In addition to honoring those nine, the project is to honor all Africans and their descendants who (with no or very little compensation) contributed mightily to America. Moreover, ATAC also requires that Independence National Historical Park (INHP) incorporate into this project the fundamental story of the indigenous people (i.e., "Philadelphia's" original inhabitants) as told by historians selected by the indigenous people themselves.

What Is ATAC:

ATAC is a broad-based coalition of African historians, activists, attorneys, elected officials, religious leaders, media personalities, and other tax-paying voters who are the descendants of the victims of the greatest holocaust in the history of humankind. ATAC spearheaded a voluminous letter writing campaign and is accumulating a vast amount of signatures in its continuing petition drive, totaling more than 15,000. ATAC held large and vocal demonstrations on July 3, 2002, July 3, 2003, July 3, 2004, and July 1, 2005. In connection with the projected \$4.5 million cost of the President's House plan, ATAC provided substantial documentation to U.S. House Appropriations Committee member Congressman Chaka Fattah of Pennsylvania, who was instrumental in securing an amendment to the Interior Department's 2003 budget requiring the National Park Service to develop plans for the President's House site, including an "appropriate commemoration" of the nine enslaved African descendants there. In August 2005, primarily through the efforts of Congressman Fattah, \$3.6 million in federal funding was made available for the site and the commemoration. Similarly, in October 2004, ATAC also helped to secure \$1.5 million from Mayor John Street of Philadelphia toward the funding of the commemorative project. In addition, ATAC has the active support of Black (and other) elected officials throughout Pennsylvania.

Why ATAC Requires It:

ATAC requires the commemorative project because justice demands it. Justice demands it because our ancestors as forced laborers transformed America into the economic world power that it remains today, because our ancestors died for America in all of its wars, and because our ancestors had their freedom, culture, family, language, land, religion, name, and often their sanity, limbs, and even lives ruthlessly stripped from them for three centuries by America (and other European-initiated slave trading countries) in a manner unlike anything ever experienced in the history of humankind. ATAC also requires the commemorative project because it an essential step toward telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about American history.

For more information, contact Michael Coard, Esquire at The Bowser Law Center at 215/552-8714 or at MichaelCoard@msn.com. Also, go to www.avenge.biz and www.ushistory.org/presidentshouse/slaves/index.htm